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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a needs assessment study undertaken to determine student attitudes toward womens studies. Specifically it proposes a male/female relations course and outlines a data-based approach for teaching a college level communication dynamics course based on the assessment. The needs assessment sample consisted of 481 students at Rutgers University. A 30-item questionnaire directed respondents to select up to nine high interest topics from a list of 20. Findings indicated that students were most interested in male/female roles and stereotypes, practical exercises to improve communication with the opposite sex, sexuality as an influence on interpersonal communication, and nonverbal communication differences between men and women. They were least interested in an historical overview of male/female liberation movements and research strategies for studying sex roles and communication. Findings also indicated that 53% of respondents would probably register for the proposed course and that there were few differences according to gender and/or academic major. A course based on this needs assessment set the following objectives: to help students understand role theory, consider the advantages and disadvantages of roles affecting interpersonal relationships, become aware of gender role stereotyping in mass media, recognize verbal and nonverbal communication differences between men and women, and be able to use behavioral science approaches to studying gender role dynamics. Activities recommended to achieve these objectives included keeping a journal, preparing written answers to assigned reading, discussing issues in class, and writing research reports. The document concludes with a copy of the course survey, the assessment questionnaire, footnotes, and additional reference materials. (DB)

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Communication and Male/Female Relations:

A Behavioral Science Approach to Course Design

By

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and

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SP 012 864

Barbara A. Dennehy is a graduating senior at Rutgers College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, and has worked extensively with the Rutgers College Women's Studies Program. William R. Todd-Mancillas is an assistant professor of Human Communication at Rutgers College, and this paper is representative of his continuing interest in issues pertaining to gender roles and communication.

This paper presented at the second annual Communication, Language, and Gender Conference (Madison, Wisconsin, May 20, 1979), and also at the annual meeting of the Eastern Communication Association, sponsored by the Interpersonal and Organizational Communication Interest Group (Philadelphia, May 5, 1979).

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During the last ten years, considerable attention has been given to the study of gender roles and the myriad ways in which they affect life style preferences and human behavior.[1] In response to this increased concern, educators have developed many different types of courses which deal specifically with gender roles and related issues.[2] Of particular relevance to the fields of speech and human communication has been the introduction of large numbers of courses, which are usually entitled "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation."[3] The foci of these courses have been feminist, rhetorical, historical and political. More specifically, these courses (and many of their counterparts in the Women's Studies Departments) seek to provide relatively biased perspectives, based on rhetorical accounts of historically important events, of the presumed political oppression of women.[4]

While a rhetorical orientation might well serve the needs of a few persons intent upon buttressing an already biased perspective on male/female relations and the status of women in our society, this orientation does not satisfy the needs of many other students desirous of a more objective overview of the processes by which gender roles are developed and maintained, and of their consequent impact on individual and group behaviors. A preferred approach would be to survey some of the behavioral science literature dealing with these issues and perhaps challenge students to conduct their own empirical investigations of gender role issues. As has been argued by Bronowski and other philosophers of science,[5] one of the unique characteristics of scientific understanding is that it helps the knower to appraise the limitations of

present knowledge, which, by definition, would also result in a more objective understanding of gender roles and communication than what normally obtains from a strictly feminist or rhetorical orientation. At the very least, a behavioral science orientation should be offered students as an alternative to the status quo, heavily value-laden, approaches to gender roles and communication issues. Perhaps the combined rhetorical and behavioral science approach would afford students a richer, more balanced understanding of the issues than is normally obtained if either approach is pursued to the exclusion of the other.[6]

Accordingly, this paper explains the procedures used to develop an alternative approach toward the instruction of communication dynamics in male/female relationships. At the outset, the authors had in mind the development of a course from a communication science (nonrhetorical) perspective, which addresses topics identified by students (both male and female) as especially relevant to their lives. Because the course was to have a communication (behavioral) science perspective, care was taken to include units of instruction on empirical research methods, methods useful for studying systematically similarities, differences, and consequences of communication behaviors affecting male/female relations. An emphasis on empirical epistemology is one of the key factors distinguishing the course proposed in this paper from contemporary rhetorical approaches.

A needs assessment was conducted to identify topics perceived as most relevant to students.[7] These topics became the major content units of the proposed course. Using a needs assessment to help select content units also has the advantage of demonstrating to the intended target

population; i.e., students, that their opinions and perceived needs are taken into consideration when new courses are added to the curriculum.[8]

The remaining pages of this report describe the procedures used in conducting the needs assessment and selecting resource materials for the proposed course. Lastly, a syllabus for the proposed course details learning objectives, assignments and sequence of instructional activities, required and supplementary reading materials, grading criteria, and course policy.

METHOD

Respondents

Completed questionnaires were obtained from 481 Rutgers University students. The demographic composition of these respondents follow: Gender - 186 males, 274 females, 21 respondents of unknown gender; Year in school - 120 seniors, 137 juniors, 96 sophomores, 75 freshpersons, 36 graduate or part-time students, 17 respondents of unknown classification; Academic major - 81 majoring in human communication, 253 majoring in social science or humanities, 125 majoring in physical science or mathematics, 22 respondents of unknown classification; College affiliation - 258 Rutgers College, 93 Douglass College, 28 Livingston College, 32 Cook College, 58 from other colleges, and 12 respondents of unknown classification.[9]

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to assess students' evaluations of existing Women's Studies courses and, in particular, the perceived value of a proposed course entitled "Communication and Male/Female Relations."

The questionnaire also included a section requiring respondents to select no more than 9 topics, from a list of 20 possible topics, which would be of particular relevance to the proposed course. The remaining questions solicited information about respondents' gender, academic major, college affiliation and year in school.

A two-stage procedure was implemented in the development of this questionnaire. An initial questionnaire (see Appendix A) was constructed on the basis of an intensive review of articles and course syllabi addressing issues in male/female communication. Also, informal interviews were conducted with students and faculty, identifying from their perspectives potentially appropriate and meaningful content units.

One of the experimenters has considerable experience with the college's Women's Studies program. As a member of the college's Women's Studies Program Committee and a candidate for the Women's Studies certificate, she has first-hand knowledge of existing Women's Studies courses in the social sciences and humanities. Her perceptions concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the existing courses and her interactions with other students in these courses provided important input in determining the focus of the questionnaire.

Constructive criticism regarding the questionnaire design was solicited from several students enrolled in a communication research methods course.[10] It was largely on the basis of these criticisms that the second (and final) draft of the questionnaire was developed (see Appendix B).

Procedure

The respondents of the survey were solicited in three ways. Thirty-seven questionnaires were mailed to candidates for the Women's Studies certificate. A cover letter accompanied each questionnaire (see Appendix C.) A second set of questionnaires was mailed two weeks after the original mailing to remind and encourage those who had not yet returned the questionnaire to do so. Twenty-nine completed questionnaires were returned, for a 78% response rate.

Additionally, 100 completed questionnaires were obtained during regularly scheduled class meetings (see Table 1).

Table 1

Completed Questionnaires Obtained From In-Class Administrations

Course	Sponsoring Department	Number of Respondents
Basic Speaking	Human Communication	9
Communication and Human Relations	Human Communication	11
Communication Education	Human Communication	15
Your Family in History	History	32
Sexism in Institutions: Sports	Women's Studies (Livingston)	33
	Total	100

The final group of responses was obtained at three university snack bars and pubs. Respondents were told that a new course was being developed

and that their opinions regarding its value and content were desired. Three hundred fifty-two completed questionnaires were obtained by this method.

Data Analyses

Frequency counts were made of the number and percentage of respondents who had (1) previously enrolled in Women's Studies courses and the degree of satisfaction/dissatisfaction associated with these courses, (2) positively and negatively evaluated the proposed "Communication and Male/Female Relations" course, (3) identified each of the proposed content units as potentially meaningful aspects of the proposed course, and (4) indicated they would register for the course if it was offered.[11]

Descriptive comparisons were made between male and female respondents to identify the similarities and differences in each group's judgments of the value of the proposed course, desire to enroll in the course and selection of content units for inclusion in the course. Lastly, comparisons were also made to determine whether respondents' academic major was related to perceived value of the proposed course.

R E S U L T S

Frequency counts of responses to question #1 indicated that Women's Studies courses had been taken a total of 212 times. There were 153 responses indicating at least moderate satisfaction with these courses, as opposed to 32 responses indicating moderate or extensive disappointment. As can be seen by reference to Table 2, the most favorably evaluated courses were "Women and Literature," "Literary Relations: Contemporary Women,"

"Family in History," "History of American Women," "Sex and Pregnancy," and "Sociology of the Family." The lowest rated course, the only one receiving more negative than positive ratings, was "Sociology of Sex Roles."

Table 2

Respondents' Previous Enrollment in Women's Studies Courses and Their Degree of Satisfaction/Dissappointment[12]

Course	Total Frequency	Satisfied		Uncertain	Disappointed	
		Very	Moderately		Very	Moderately
1) The Black Woman	6	4	0	0	0	2
2) Language & Sex Roles	4	3	1	0	0	0
3) Women in Literature Europe & S.A.	5	4	0	0	0	1
4) Women & Literature	21	11	8	2	0	0
5) Literary Relations: Contemporary Women	12	6	4	1	1	0
6) The Avant Garde in Modern Literature	4	2	0	1	1	0
7) 20th Century French Women Writers	2	0	2	0	0	0
8) The Role of the Individual in History	10	5	3	0	2	0
9) Women in Non-Western World	1	1	0	0	0	0
10) Family in History	25	3	10	8	3	1
11) History of American Women	11	2	7	1	1	0
12) Sex & Pregnancy	43	17	19	2	4	1
13) Human Freedom & the Constitution	3	2	1	0	0	0
14) Psychobiology of Sex Differences	9	2	5	1	0	1
15) Ancient Near Eastern Religion	5	4	0	0	1	0
16) Sociology of the Family	33	14	9	5	3	2
17) Sociology of Sex Roles	16	2	5	1	2	6
18) 20th Century Spanish Literature	2	1	0	1	0	0
Totals	212	83	74	23	18	14

Analysis of responses to question #2 indicated that 76% of the respondents (366) evaluated the proposed "Communication and Male/Female Relations" course as at least moderately valuable, as opposed to 6.6% (32) evaluating the course as of little or no value. Thirteen percent (63) of the respondents had no opinion and 4.2% (20) failed to respond to the question.

Responses to question #3 indicated that the nine most interesting content units as judged by the respondents were: (1) Male-female roles and stereotypes--their modes of development and impact on human communication; (2) Learning to communicate with members of the opposite sex--practical exercises; (3) Sexuality as an influence on interpersonal communication; (4) Nonverbal communication differences between men and women; (5) The communication of intimacy; (6) Language communication differences between men and women; (7) Mass media portrayal of sexuality and male-female roles; (8) Alternative partnership styles--marriage, cohabitation, dating, celibacy; and (9) Sexist communication in employer-employee and student-teacher interactions (see Table 3).

Table 3

Rank Ordering of Possible Content Units by Frequency of Selection

Content Units	Frequency	Percentage
1) Male-female roles and stereotypes--their modes of development and impact on human communication	278	57.8%
2) Learning to communicate with members of the opposite sex--practical exercises	256	53.2
3) Sexuality as an influence on interpersonal communication	240	49.9
4) Nonverbal communication differences between men and women	223	46.4
5) The communication of intimacy	215	44.7
6) Language communication differences between men and women	198	41.2
7) Mass media portrayal of sexuality and male-female roles	197	41.0
8) Alternative partnership styles--marriage, cohabitation, dating, celibacy	197	41.0
9) Sexist communication in employer-employee and student-teacher interactions	192	40.0
10)The meaning of masculinity/femininity	177	36.8
11)Sex roles as they affect family communication	146	30.4
12)Learning to communicate with members of the same sex--practical exercises	145	30.1
13) Sex roles as they affect vocational opportunities	140	29.1
14) Cross-cultural differences in male/female communication	138	28.7
15) The status of men in women's liberation movements	134	27.9
16) Sexist language	111	23.1
17) Sex roles as they affect small group communication	99	20.6
18) Sex roles as they affect speaker/audience interaction	78	16.2
19) A rhetorical (historical) overview of male/female liberation movements	76	15.8
20) Research strategies for studying sex roles and communication	73	15.2

One hundred ten respondents answered question #4, requesting additional topics which might be considered in the course. However, only five of the responses suggested content issues substantially different from those already included in the previous listing. Nine respondents indicated that all relevant possibilities had already been delineated in the previous question.

Analysis of responses to question #5 indicated that 53% (256) of the respondents would probably or definitely register for the proposed course, as opposed to 13% (64) who indicated that they probably or definitely would not enroll for the course. Respondents in this latter category occasionally explained why they would not take the course. The two most frequently occurring explanations were that their major was too structured to allow them to take additional electives or that they did not want to take a politically oriented "women's lib" course. Twenty-three percent (113) of the respondents were uncertain as to whether they would register for the course, and 10% (48) did not respond to the question.

Comparisons were made between the data collected on male and female respondents to determine similarities and differences in perceived value of the proposed course, willingness to take the course, and rank orderings of preferred content units. Seventy-two percent (134) of the male and 80% (125) of the female respondents perceived the course as at least moderately valuable (see Table 4). Only 10% (18) of the male and 4.4% (12) of the female respondents perceived the course as having little or no value.

Regarding willingness to register for the course, 42% (78) of the male and 64% (175) of the female respondents wanted to register for the course (see Table 5). It is not clear why so many more female than male respondents

wanted to enroll in the course. One possible explanation is that many males have been systematically discouraged from participating in women's studies courses, and this may have disposed many male students from seeking enrollment, despite the fact that a much higher percentage of men perceived the course as potentially valuable.

Table 4

Breakdown of Respondents by Gender:
Perceived Value of Proposed Course

	Very Valuable		Moderately Valuable		Uncertain		Of Little Value		Of No Value	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Males	63	34	71	38	28	15	14	8	4	2
Females	115	42	105	38	32	12	11	4	1	0.4

Table 5

Breakdown of Respondents by Gender:
Desire to Register for Proposed Course

	Definitely		Probably		Don't Know		Probably Not		Definitely Not	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Males	22	12	56	30	58	31	22	12	10	5
Females	55	20	120	44	55	20	20	7	8	3

There was considerable agreement between male and female respondents in their selection of instructional units most relevant to the proposed course (see Table 6). For both males and females, 7 topics were included among the 9 most preferred content units: Learning to communicate with members of the opposite sex - practical exercises; Male-female roles and stereotypes - their

modes of development and impact on human communication; Sexuality as an influence on interpersonal communication; Alternative partnership styles - marriage, cohabitation, dating, celibacy; Nonverbal communication differences between men and women; The communication of intimacy; and Mass media portrayal of sexuality and male-female roles.

Two topics appeared in the top 9 rankings for men, which did not also appear in the top 9 rankings for women: The meaning of masculinity/femininity and The status of men in women's liberation movements. Similarly, two topics appeared in the top 9 rankings for women, which did not also appear in the top 9 rankings for men: Language communication differences between men and women, and Sexist communication in employer-employee and teacher-student interactions.

Table 6

Rank Ordering of Possible Content Units by Frequency of Selection by Gender of Respondent

Males

Content Units	Frequency	Percentage
1) Learning to communicate with members of the opposite sex--practical exercises	102	55%
2) Male-female roles and stereotypes--their modes of development and impact on human communication	97	52
3) Sexuality as an influence on interpersonal communication	84	45
4) Alternative partnership styles--marriage, cohabitation, dating, celibacy	79	42
5) Nonverbal communication differences between men and women	78	42
6) The communication of intimacy	74	40
7) The meaning of masculinity/femininity	72	39
8) Mass media portrayal of sexuality and male-female roles	69	37
9) The status of men in women's liberation movements	63	34
10) Sexist communication in employer-employee and student-teacher interactions	62	33
11) Sex roles as they affect family communication	60	32
12) Language communication differences between men and women	53	28
13) Cross-cultural differences in male/female communication	46	25
14) Learning to communicate with members of the same sex--practical exercises	46	25
15) Sex roles as they affect vocational opportunities	41	22
16) Sexist language	38	20
17) Sex roles as they affect small group communication	36	19
18) A rhetorical (historical) overview of male/female liberation movements	34	18
19) Sex roles as they affect speaker/audience interactions	32	17
20) Research strategies for studying sex roles and communication	32	17

Table 6 (continued)

Females

Content Units	Frequency	Percentage
1) Male-female roles and stereotypes--their modes of development and impact on human communication	169	61%
2) Sexuality as an influence on interpersonal communication	148	54
3) Learning to communicate with members of the opposite sex--practical exercises	145	53
4) Nonverbal communication differences between men and women	139	51
5) Language communication differences between men and women	139	51
6) The communication of intimacy	135	49
7) Sexist communication in employer-employee and teacher-student interactions	125	45
8) Mass media portrayal of sexuality and male-female roles	123	45
9) Alternative partnership styles--marriage, cohabitation, dating, celibacy	115	42
10) The meaning of masculinity/femininity	101	37
11) Learning to communicate with members of the same sex--practical exercises	95	35
12) Sex roles as they affect vocation opportunities	93	34
13) Cross-cultural differences in male/female communication	89	32
14) Sex roles as they affect family communication	82	30
15) Sexist language	67	24
16) The status of men in women's liberation movements	66	24
17) Sex roles as they affect small group communication	60	22
18) Sex roles as they affect speaker/audience interaction	41	15
19) A rhetorical (historical) overview of male/female liberation movements	40	15
20) Research strategies for studying sex roles and communication	39	14

Interpretation and Course Syllabus

The results of the needs assessment clearly indicate that most students, regardless of academic major, would value the introduction of a course addressing communication dynamics between men and women. It is also interesting to point out that the introduction of this course would be minimally competitive with existing Women's Studies courses, because the only existing course of comparable content interest (Sociology of Sex Roles) was also the least favorably rated of the Women's Studies courses.

Following a thorough review of the literature, and also in response to needs assessment results, a syllabus was constructed for a 15 week semester. The syllabus includes as its content units most of those topics identified by both male and female respondents as among the 9 topics most relevant to the proposed course. Where there were discrepancies between male and female respondents, care was taken to construct a hybrid unit that included some aspects of units identified as important by males as well as aspects identified as important by females. One topic, "Sexuality as an influence on interpersonal communication," was not included in the curriculum, as it is a subject area better dealt with through a series of ongoing workshops sponsored by the Rutgers College Counseling Center. Moreover, human sexuality is a sensitive topic and it would perhaps be better not to risk offending the more conservative elements in student populations. Regardless of an instructor's intentions, to pursue detailed discussions of so sensitive an issue is to risk misinterpretation by students who can do much harm to the department's and instructor's reputations through their complaints to

Deans, parents, and other authority figures. Of course, no course entitled "Male/Female Relations and Communication" could avoid all manner of discussions on human sexuality, nor would this be an appropriate parameter for the course. All that is being said here is that it would be better to avoid concentrated attention given to human sexuality issues, such as one might encounter in courses or workshops specifically designed to explore intimate discussions of sexual preferences and behaviors. The proposed syllabus and course description follow.

Syllabus and Course Description

"Communication and Male/Female Relations"

Description of Objectives

The primary objectives of this course are as follows:

1. Obtain a basic understanding of role theory and consider the advantages and disadvantages of roles affecting personal and interpersonal relationships. Specific attention will be focused on gender roles, including the modes of development and effects on men's and women's lives.

2. Facilitate an awareness of gender role stereotyping in mass media and consider the implications of these portrayals for the developmen, maintenance and modification of gender roles.

3. Facilitate an awareness of differences and similarities between men's and women's verbal communication behaviors and consider their implications for the development, maintenance and modification of gender roles.

4. Facilitate an awareness of differences and similarities between men's and women's nonverbal communication behaviors and consider their implications for the development, maintenance and modification of gender roles.

5. Facilitate an awareness of traditional and non-traditional male/female partnership styles and their communication dynamics. Some experiential exercises will be conducted challenging students to

reconsider and possibly modify their current communication behaviors with members of the other gender.

6. Facilitate a basic understanding of and ability to use behavioral science approaches toward increasing our understanding of gender role dynamics. As evidence of having met this objective, students will complete and present an in-class ten to fifteen minute oral presentation on an empirically based mini-study focusing on a specific gender role issue.

Rationale for Objectives

Taken together, the above content units provide a broad overview of some of the most important and current findings in gender role research. Students are required to conduct a mini-study to heighten their appreciation for and understanding of empirical research procedures. Term papers consisting exclusively of literature reviews are not appropriate, as they do little to increase student understanding of behavioral science as a dynamic process.

Cautionary Note

As may be gleaned from the above objectives and rationale, this course is clearly devoid of a "rhetorical" or "feminist" orientation. No attempt will be made to identify or systematically study the rhetorical, historical or political dynamics of women's liberation movements. Students interested in these latter perspectives are encouraged to consult with the instructor about enrolling in other courses particularly suited to meet these objectives.

Moreover, both men as well as women are encouraged to take this course. The instructors of this course take the position that constructive male/female communication is transactional in nature, and that only a distorted perception of male/female communication would arise as a consequence of either of the genders being exclusively represented in this course. In fact, the success of in-class discussions will be largely dependent upon a balanced sharing of viewpoints from all possible perspectives.

Grading Criteria

1. Homework Assignments = 30%: Many, brief homework assignments will be given during the first half of this course. In general, these assignments will consist of responses to review questions over the assigned readings and will constitutea maximum of 2-3 typewritten pages of responses. These assignments will be evaluated on three

criteria--currency (no late papers accepted), neatness (work must be typed to obtain grades of B or A), and completeness (thoroughness in responding to review questions). Students will not be evaluated on the basis of their personal opinions, but rather on the succinctness and care qith which they express their thoughts.

2. Journal Project = 10%: Students are required to purchase a spiral notebook to be used for this assignment. Students will identify a male/female work, friendship, or love relationship which they will be able to monitor throughout the course. The purpose of this assignment will be to assist students in their application of reading and in-class discussions to specific out-of-class relationships between men and women.

3. In-class Participation = 10%: In order for this course to succeed, in-class participation is a must. Students are encouraged to verbalize their viewpoints and question the viewpoints of others. However, students will not be penalized for not verbalizing their thoughts and feelings, as this would unfairly penalize those persons experiencing considerable communication anxiety when transacting in small group contexts. Still, since it is important that students attend class discussions and at least listen to verbalized viewpoints, a unique type of pop quiz will be administered during the remaining five to ten minutes of 20% or more of the class periods. These quizes will consist of one open-ended question, asking the students to summarize briefly the content of a given day's in-class discussion or lecture. All quizes will be assigned grades of B or A; thus, merely having attended class is sufficient to warrant a respectable grade. Since it is not possible to recreate a given in-class discussion, absentees will not be able to make-up these quizes and will receive grades of F. Accordingly, studetns are encouraged not to miss any more classes than is absolutely necessary.

4. Mini-Study = 30%: Students will design, conduct and report on an empirically based mini-study seeking to further our understanding of a particular aspect of male/female relations or gender role dynamics. Students will receive systematic guidance in the selection of their research area, literature review, research design, data modification and analysis procedures, and consideration of implications for current practices and future research. Students are encouraged to work in dyads, but may choose to work alone if they so desire. A minimum of five to ten annotated references are to accompany the research reports, and the text of theses reports is not to exceed ten pages. A comprehensive bibliography will be provided to assist in identification of useful references (see Appendix D).

These mini-study presentations will occur during the last five weeks of the course, according to the following procedure. Presentation dates will be randomly assigned to students. Students

can switch their assigned date with other students, but the instructor will not intervene to reassign presentation dates once they have been established. Immediately following an in-class presentation, students will receive from their peers and instructor brief written critiques of their study, including suggestions on how the study could have been improved. Students will use this information in their writing of a "post hoc" analysis of their project (three to five pages), which will explain how they could have done their project differently to avoid the shortfalls gleaned by peers and instructor. This post hoc analysis has the potential of improving the original evaluation of their written report by a full letter grade, or any fraction thereof. Moreover, students presenting their studies during the earlier presentation periods will have more time to complete their post hoc analyses than students assigned later presentation periods.

5. Final Exam = 20%: A final exam, and only exam for the course, will be administered during the regularly scheduled examination period. The format of this exam will be 50% multiple choice questions and 50% short and long essay questions. Students are responsible for all the material covered in readings, in-class discussions and presentations, and homework assignments. However, "picky" questions will be avoided, as this exam is intended to be less a measure of recall ability than a broad-based understanding of the most important topics and findings considered in this course.

Texts

Eakins, Barbara Westbrook and R. Gene Eakins. Sex Differences in Human Communication. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978.

Chafetz, Janet Saltzman. Masculine Feminine or Human? Itasca, Illinois: F.E. Peacock, 1978.

Farrell, Warren. The Liberated Man. New York: Random House, 1978.

Grant, Vernon W. Falling in Love. New York: Springer Publishing, 1976.

Henley, Nancy M. Body Politics. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977.

Timetable for Fifteen Week Semester

Weeks 1 & 2: Introduction to course, distribution of syllabus, and careful, complete explanation of course objectives, activities, and policies. Review question assignments will accompany the following readings: Eakins

& Eakins, Chap. 1; Farrell, Chaps. 1-5; Chafetz, pp. 1-44. By the conclusion of this unit, students will have a basic understanding of role theory and, in particular, an understanding of what gender roles are, how they obtain, and what some of their consequences are.

Weeks 3 & 4: An overview of media portrayals of men and women and consideration of their impact in the maintenance of gender role stereotypes. In addition, at least two in-class discussions will be set aside to assist students in their selection of appropriate topics for mini-studies, and detailed guidance will be given on procedures for the conducting and reporting of these mini-studies. At least five follow-up assignments and discussions will occur prior to the first in-class presentation to ensure students' understanding and responsible completion of this assignment. Review question assignments will accompany the following readings: Farrell, Chaps. 6-8; Chafetz, pp. 44-172.

Weeks 5 & 6: Specific consideration of language behavior differences between men and women. Review question assignments will accompany the following readings: Farrell, Chaps. 9-12; Eakins & Eakins, Chaps. 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Weeks 7 & 8: Specific consideration of nonverbal behavior differences and interactions between men and women, and their implications for the maintenance (or modification) of existing status differences. Review question assignments will accompany the following readings: Eakins & Eakins, Chap. 6; Henley, Chaps. 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Weeks 9 & 10: A series of readings and discussions of gender role dynamics as they affect male/female relationships and partnership styles. If students are willing, arrangements will be made to conduct an out-of-class (and optional) role-reversal activity, whereby students can experience first-hand the consequences for violating gender role expectations. One possibility would be the conducting of a gender role reversal weekend, where men implement communication behaviors (both verbal and nonverbal) which they perceive to be typical of women and similarly, women implement communication behaviors (both verbal and nonverbal) which they perceive to be typical of men. Review question assignments will accompany the following readings: Chafetz, pp. 173-220; Farrell, Chaps. 13-15; Grant, all chapters. Additional recommended--but not required readings--include articles 4, 5, 8, 9, 16 and 17 in Libby and Whitehurst, Marriage and Alternatives, on reserve.

Weeks 11 thru 15: These remaining weeks are set aside for mini-study presentations. During these remaining weeks, no more than three to four reading assignments will be made. The purpose of these remaining reading assignments will be to help bring conclusion and synthesis to all class activities to date.

Week 16: Final exam. Grades will be posted no later than three days following the exam.

Instructor's Note: Please feel free to contact the instructor concerning any of the above assignments or any other issues pertinent to this course.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper was to argue in favor of the introduction of a male/female relations course different from existing rhetorical or feminist alternatives. The proposed course includes content units gleaned from an assessment of student perceived needs and addresses these needs from a behavioral science perspective.

If the reader finds this course favorable to his/her teaching needs, then it is highly recommended that efforts be made to incorporate various aspects of this course curriculum and dynamic into existing courses as a means of trial-testing the efficacy of the proposed course. Also, full scale implementation might be done on a trial basis, and gather formative evaluation data, followed by appropriate modifications in course design prior to the course's introduction to the regular curriculum. Future work in this area should result in the public sharing of this information (through publications and conference papaers), making it possible for the academic community to consider rationally the efficacy of the proposed approaches.

FOOTNOTES

[1] See, for example, the introduction of a new journal specifically attending to the issues of sex roles and sexism: Sex Roles--A Journal of Research, edited by Phyllis A. Katz, The Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York. Of particular concern to the field of communication is the Bulletin: Women's Studies in Communication, edited by Sandra E. Purnell, Department of Speech Communication, California Saate University, Los Angeles. Other pertinent publications are to be found in S. Trenholm and W.R. Todd-Mancillas, "Student Perceptions of Sexism," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, 64 (1978), 267-83, and the 1978 Proceedings of the Communication, Language, and Sex Conference, edited by V. Richmond and C.L. Berryman (Newbury House, 1979).

[2] A current listing of various of these courses is to be found in E.B. Berry, S.E. Purnell and S.B. Shimanoff, "Communication and the Sexes: Instructional Strategies," an unpublished manuscript distributed at the 1979 Western Speech Communication Association (Los Angeles).

[3] See, for example, W.A. Linkugel, "The Rhetoric of American Feminism: A Social Movement Course," The Speech Teacher, 23 (March, 1974), 121-130.

[4] It is not argued here that women have not been oppressed, but merely that frequently a course based on a feminist orientation is constructed in such a manner as to disregard information contrary to its political base. As such, proponents of the feminist perspective sometimes overlook the possibility of less value-laden interpretations of differential status relationships between men and women.

[5] N. McK. Agnew and S.W. Pyke, The Science Game (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1978); E.G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957); J. Bronowski, Science Game (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1978); E.G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957); J. Bronowski, Science and Human Values (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959); J. Bronowski, The Ascent of Man (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973); K.W. Eckhardt and M.D. Ermann, Social Research Methods (New York: Random House, 1977); F.N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964); C. Selltiz, M. Jahoda, M. Deutsch, and S.W. Cook, Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1959); J.J.C. Smart, Between Science and Philosophy (New York: Random House, 1968); B.W. Tuckman, Conducting Educational Research (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972).

[6] Parallel arguments are to be found among those philosophers arguing for a bridge between art and science, including R.K. Merton, "The Mosaic of the Behavioral Sciences," in The Behavioral Science Today, ed. B. Berelson (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), and R. Nisbet, Sociology as an Art Form (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

[7] Arguments in favor of needs assessments as devices for assisting in the design and implementation of planned change include, R.M. Gagne and L.J. Briggs, Principles of Instructional Design (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974); R.G. Havelock, Planning for Innovation (Ann Arbor, Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge, 1973);

G.L. Lippitt, Visualizing Change (Fairfax, Virginia: NTL-Learning Resources Corporation, 1973); W.R. Todd-Mancillas, R.J. Kibler, N. Dodi, W. Dick, and S. Rollin, "A Review and Critical Analysis of the Literature Pertaining to the Diffusion of Educational Innovations," (Paper presented at the annual convention of the International Communication Association, Chicago, 1975).

[8] Similar efforts are frequently made by professional organizations seeking to obtain information from their membership, useful for effecting constructive change. See, for example, B. Cox, "Mancillas Completes Needs Assessment for ICA," ICA Newsletter, 6 (1978), 7-8.

[9] The majority of these respondents were obtained from Rutgers College, because the course proposed herein is for Rutgers College students, although students are encouraged to take the course, regardless of their college affiliation.

[10] Appreciation is extended to Ms. Karen Meyers, Ms. Sally Mulroy, Ms. Anna Bella Riccio, Ms. Linda Montonelli, and Mr. Michael O'Keef for their useful criticisms.

[11] A. Barr, J.H. Goodnight, J.P. Sall, and J.T. Helwig, A User's Guide to SAS (Raleigh, North Carolina: SAS Institute Inc., 1976).

[12] W.R. Todd-Mancillas, et al, 1975.

Appendix A

COURSE SURVEY

1. Which college do you attend?
   __Rutgers __Douglass __Livingston __Cook __Other
2. Your class:
   __1979 __1980 __1981 __1982 __ Unknown (part time student)
3. Sex.
   __Male __Female
4. Major: _____
   If undeclared, probable major _____
5. Are you aware that Rutgers College offers a Women's Studies Certificate?
   __Yes __No
6. Are you a candidate for the Women's Studies Certificate?
   __Yes __No
7. Have you or are you now taking any women's studies courses at Rutgers College? (See list on next page)
   __Yes __No
   a. If so, which one(s)?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   b. Were you generally satisfied with the women's studies you have taken?

Very	Moderately	No	Moderately	Very
__ satisfied	__ satisfied	__ opinion	__ disappointed	__disappointe

8. Whether or not you have taken any women's studies courses, did you know before seeing this questionaire that these courses are part of the Women's Studies Program at Rutgers College?
   __Yes __No
9. Do you think a course dealing communication and male-female relationships would be a worthwhile contribution to the Human Communication Department?
   __Yes __No
10. Which of the following topics would be of the greatest interest to you in such a course? (Check as many as are applicable)

   __Male-female roles and stereotypes
   __interpersonal perception and attraction
   __sexuality as an influence on interpersonal communication
   __differences in communication styles between the sexes
   __intimate relationships
   __mass media portrayal of sexuality and male-female roles
   __partnership styles

11. Please suggest any additional topics which you feel should be included in such a course:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Would you register for such a course if it were offered?
__Definitely __Probably __Don't know __Probably not __Definitely not

Please use this space below to make any additional comments about the suggested course and/or the women's studies program:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

WOMEN'S STUDIES COURSE AT RUTGERS COLLEGE:

014-206 The Black Woman
070-312 Language & Sex Roles
090-241,242 Women in the Literature Continental Europe and South America
350-360 Women and Literature
350-393,493 Literary Relations: Contemporary Women
350-465 The Avant Garde in Modern Literature
420-313 20th Century French Women Writers
510-227 The Role of the Individual in History
510-318 Women in Non-Western World
510-400 Family in History
512-420 History of American Women
760-200 Sex and Pregnancy
790-441,442 Human Freedom and the Constitution
830-320 Psychobiology of Sex Differences
840-326 Ancient Near Eastern Religion
920-306 Sociology of the Family
920-324 Sociology of Sex Roles
940-438 20th Century Spanish Literature

Appendix B

Please do not put your name on this questionnaire.

This questionnaire is an attempt to measure student interest in a course which might be developed for the Rutgers College undergraduate curriculum. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey and answer the questions as honestly as possible. Use the space provided at the end for any additional comments or questions you have.

---

1. Have you or are you now taking any of the Rutgers College courses listed below? Please circle the number of those which are applicable, and indicate your satisfaction/dissatisfaction with those courses in the space provided at right. If you have not had any of these courses, go on to question #2.

Check appropriate response:

	Very Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Uncertain	Moderately Disappointed	Very Disappointed
1. 014-206 The Black Woman					
2. 070-312 Language & Sex Roles					
3. 090-241/2 Women in Literature of Europe & S.A.					
4. 350-360 Women & Literature					
5. 350-393, 493 Literary Relations: Contemporary Women					
6. 350-465 The Avant Garde in Modern Literature					
7. 420-313 20th Century French Women Writers					
8. 510-227 The Role of the Individual in History					
9. 510-318 Women in Non-Western World					
10. 510-400 Family in History					
11. 512-420 History of American Women					
12. 760-200 Sex and Pregnancy					
13. 790-441,442 Human Freedom & the Constitution					
14. 830-320 Psychobiology of Sex Differences					
15. 840-326 Ancient Near Eastern Religion					
16. 920-306 Sociology of the Family					
17. 920-324 Sociology of Sex Roles					
18. 940-438 20th Century Spanish Literature					

2. How valuable would a course dealing with communication and male/female relations be to the undergraduate curriculum?

1. Very Valuable 2. Moderately Valuable 3. Uncertain 4. Of Little Value

5. Of No Value

3. Which of the following topics would be of most interest in such a course? Please circle no more than 9.

1. Male-female roles and stereotypes-their modes of development and impact on human communication.
2. Sexuality as an influence on interpersonal communication.
3. Language communication differences between men and women.
4. The communication of intimacy.
5. Mass media portrayal of sexuality and male-female roles.
6. Alternative partnership styles-marriage, cohabitation, dating, celibacy.
7. Cross-cultural differences in male/female communication.
8. Sexist language.
9. Learning to communicate with members of the opposite sex-practical exercises.
10. Learning to communicate with members of the same sex-practical exercises.
11. Sex roles as they affect family communication.
12. Sex roles as they affect small group communication.
13. Sex roles as they affect vocational opportunities.
14. Sex roles as they affect speaker/audience interaction.
15. Nonverbal communication differences between men and women.
16. A rhetorical (historical)overview of male/female liberation movements.
17. Sexist communication in employer-employee and student-teacher interactions.
18. Research strategies for studying sex roles and communication.
19. The meaning of masculinity/femininity.

4. Please suggest any additional topics which you feel should be included in such a course:

5. Would you register for this course if it were offered?*
1. Definitely 2. Probably 3. Don't Know 4. Probably Not 5. Definitely Not

6. Are you a candidate for a Women's Studies certificate? Offered at Rutgers College?
1. Yes 2. No

7. Which college do you attend?
1. Rutgers 2. Douglass 3. Livingston 4. Cook 5. Other

8. Your class:
1. 1979 2. 1980 3. 1981 4. 1982 5. Unknown (part-time)

9. Sex: 1. Male 2. Female

10. Major: _____

If undeclared, general area of study _____

COMMENTS:

* If in response to question #5, you circled numbers 4 or 5, then briefly describe your reasons for not wanting to take this course. Please be honest in your response. We only want this information so that we can better understand the particular reasons for your response.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!!

Appendix C

I am helping to design a course for the undergraduate curriculum here, and hopefully this course will be offered in the near future. I would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to fill out this brief questionnaire concerning the course. I believe the questionnaire is self-explanatory. If you have any questions or additional suggestions or comments about the course or the questionnaire I would be happy to hear from you after you have completed the survey. Thank you.

Appendix D

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIALS BY TOPIC AREA

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